

§ 225.9 Program assistance to sponsors.

(a) *Start-up payments.* At their discretion, State agencies may make start-up payments to sponsors which have executed Program agreements. Start-up payments shall not be made more than two months before the sponsor is scheduled to begin food service operations and shall not exceed 20 percent of the sponsor's approved administrative budget. The amount of the start-up payment shall be deducted from the first advance payment for administrative costs or, if the sponsor does not receive advance payments, from the first administrative reimbursement.

(b) *Commodity assistance.* (1) Sponsors eligible to receive commodities under the Program include: Self-preparation sponsors; sponsors which have entered into an agreement with a school or school food authority for the preparation of meals; and sponsors which are school food authorities and have competitively procured Program meals from the same food service management company from which they competitively procured meals for the National School Lunch Program during the last period in which school was in session. The State agency shall make available to these sponsors information on available commodities. Sponsors shall use in the Program food donated by the Department and accepted by sponsors.

(2) Not later than June 1 of each year, State agencies shall prepare a list of the sponsors which are eligible to receive commodities and the average daily number of eligible meals to be served by each of these sponsors. If the State agency does not handle the distribution of commodities donated by the Department, this list shall be forwarded to the agency of the State responsible for the distribution of commodities. The State agency shall be responsible for promptly revising the list to reflect additions or terminations of sponsors and for adjusting the average daily participation data as it deems necessary.

(c) *Advance payments.* At the sponsor's request, State agencies shall make advance payments to sponsors which have executed Program agreements in order to assist these sponsors

in meeting operating costs and administrative expenses. For sponsors operating under a continuous school calendar, all advance payments shall be forwarded on the first day of each month of operation. Advance payments shall be made by the dates specified in paragraphs (c) (1) and (2) of this section for all other sponsors whose requests are received at least 30 days prior to those dates. Requests received less than 30 days prior to those dates shall be acted upon within 30 days of receipt. When making advance payments, State agencies shall observe the following criteria:

(1) *Operating costs.* (i) State agencies shall make advance payments for operating costs by June 1, July 15, and August 15. Except for school food authorities, sponsors must conduct training sessions before receiving the second advance payment. Training sessions must cover Program duties and responsibilities for the sponsor's staff and for site personnel. A sponsor shall not receive advance operating cost payments for any month in which it will participate in the Program for less than ten days.

(ii) To determine the amount of the advance payment to any sponsor, the State agency shall employ whichever of the following methods will result in the larger payment:

(A) The total operating costs paid to the sponsor for the same calendar month in the preceding year; or

(B) For vended sponsors, 50 percent of the amount determined by the State agency to be needed that month for meals, and, for self-preparation sponsors, 65 percent of the amount determined by the State agency to be needed that month for meals.

(2) *Administrative costs.* (i) State agencies shall make advance payments for administrative costs by June 1 and July 15. To be eligible for the second advance payment, the sponsor must certify that it is operating the number of sites for which the administrative budget was approved and that its projected administrative costs do not differ significantly from the approved budget. A sponsor shall not receive advance administrative costs payments for any month in which it will participate in the Program for less than 10 days. However, if a sponsor operates for

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less than 10 days in June but for at least 10 days in August, the second advance administrative costs payment shall be made by August 15.

(ii) Each payment shall equal one-third of the total amount which the State agency determines the sponsor will need to administer its program. For sponsors which will operate for 10 or more days in only one month and, therefore, will qualify for only one advance administrative costs payment, the payment shall be no less than one-half, and no more than two-thirds, of the total amount which the State agency determines the sponsor will need to administer its program.

(3) *Advance payment estimates.* When determining the amount of advance payments payable to the sponsor, the State agency shall make the best possible estimate based on the sponsor's request and any other available data. Under no circumstances may the amount of the advance payment for operating or administrative costs exceed the amount estimated by the State agency to be needed by the sponsor to meet operating or administrative costs, respectively.

(4) *Limit.* The sum of the advance operating and administrative costs payments to a sponsor for any one month shall not exceed \$40,000 unless the State agency determines that a larger payment is necessary for the effective operation of the Program and the sponsor demonstrates sufficient administrative and managerial capability to justify a larger payment.

(5) *Deductions from advance payments.* The State agency shall deduct from either advance operating payments or advance administrative payments the amount of any previous payment which is under dispute or which is part of a demand for recovery under § 225.12.

(6) *Withholding of advance payments.* If the State agency has reason to believe that a sponsor will not be able to submit a valid claim for reimbursement covering the month for which advance payments have already been made, the subsequent month's advance payment shall be withheld until a valid claim is received.

(7) *Repayment of excess advance payments.* Upon demand of the State agency, sponsors shall repay any advance

Program payments in excess of the amount cited on a valid claim for reimbursement.

(d) *Reimbursements.* Sponsors shall not be eligible for reimbursements for operating and administrative costs unless they have executed an agreement with the State agency. All reimbursements shall be in accordance with the terms of this agreement. Reimbursements shall not be paid for meals served at a site before the sponsor has received written notification that the site has been approved for participation in the Program. Income accruing to a sponsor's program shall be deducted from combined operating and administrative costs. The State agency may make full or partial reimbursement upon receipt of a claim for reimbursement, but shall first make any necessary adjustments in the amount to be paid. The following requirements shall be observed in submitting and paying claims:

(1) School food authorities that operate the Program, and operate more than one child nutrition program under a single State agency, must use a common claim form (as provided by the State agency) for claiming reimbursement for meals served under those programs.

(2) No reimbursement may be issued until the sponsor certifies that it operated all sites for which it is approved and that there has been no significant change in its projected administrative costs since its preceding claim and, for a sponsor receiving an advance payment for only one month, that there has been no significant change in its projected administrative costs since its initial advance administrative costs payment.

(3) Sponsors which operate less than 10 days in the final month of operations shall submit a combined claim for the final month and the immediate preceding month within 60 days of the last day of operation.

(4) The State agency shall forward reimbursements within 45 days of receiving valid claims. If a claim is incomplete or invalid, the State agency shall return the claim to the sponsor within

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30 days with an explanation of the reason for disapproval. If the sponsor submits a revised claim, final action shall be completed within 45 days of receipt.

(5) Claims for reimbursement shall report information in accordance with the financial management system established by the State agency, and in sufficient detail to justify the reimbursement claimed and to enable the State agency to provide the Reports of Summer Food Service Program Operations required under § 225.8(b). In submitting a claim for reimbursement, each sponsor shall certify that the claim is correct and that records are available to support this claim. Failure to maintain such records may be grounds for denial of reimbursement for meals served and/or administrative costs claimed during the period covered by the records in question. The costs of meals served to adults performing necessary food service labor may be included in the claim. Under no circumstances may a sponsor claim the cost of any disallowed meals as operating costs.

(6) A final Claim for Reimbursement shall be postmarked and/or submitted to the State agency not later than 60 days after the last day of the month covered by the claim. State agencies may establish shorter deadlines at their discretion. Claims not filed within the 60 day deadline shall not be paid with Program funds unless FNS determines that an exception should be granted. The State agency shall promptly take corrective action with respect to any Claim for Reimbursement as determined necessary through its claim review process or otherwise. In taking such corrective action, State agencies may make upward adjustments in Program funds claimed on claims filed within the 60 day deadline if such adjustments are completed within 90 days of the last day of the month covered by the claim and are reflected in the final Program Operations Report (FNS-418). Upward adjustments in Program funds claimed which are not reflected in the final FNS-418 for the month covered by the claim cannot be made unless authorized by FNS. Downward adjustments in Program funds claimed shall always be made without FNS authorization, regardless

of when it is determined that such adjustments are necessary.

(7) Payments to a sponsor for operating costs must equal the lesser of the following totals:

(i) The actual operating costs incurred by the sponsor; or

(ii) The sum of the amounts derived by multiplying the number of meals, by type, actually served under the sponsor's program to eligible children by the current rates for each meal type, as adjusted in accordance with paragraph (d)(9) of this section.

(8) Payments to a sponsor for administrative costs must equal the lowest of the following totals:

(i) The amount estimated in the sponsor's approved administrative budget (taking into account any amendments);

(ii) The actual administrative costs incurred by the sponsor; or

(iii) The sum of the amounts derived by multiplying the number of meals, by type, actually served under the sponsor's program to eligible children by the current administrative rates for each meal type, as adjusted in accordance with paragraph (d)(9) of this section. Sponsors must be eligible to receive additional administrative reimbursement for each meal served to participating children at rural or self-preparation sites, and the rates for such additional administrative reimbursement must be adjusted in accordance with paragraph (d)(9) of this section.

(9) On each January 1, or as soon thereafter or as practicable, FNS will publish a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER announcing any adjustment to the reimbursement rates described in paragraphs (d)(7)(ii) and (d)(8)(iii) of this section. Adjustments will be based upon changes in the series for food away from home of the Consumer Price Index(CPI) for all urban consumers since the establishment of the rates. Higher rates will be established for Alaska and Hawaii, based on the CPI for those States.

(10) Sponsors of camps shall be reimbursed only for meals served to children in camps whose eligibility for

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Program meals is documented. Sponsors of NYSP sites shall only claim reimbursement for meals served to children enrolled in the NYSP.

(11) If a State agency has reason to believe that a sponsor or food service management company has engaged in unlawful acts in connection with Program operations, evidence found in audits, reviews, or investigations shall be a basis for nonpayment of the applicable sponsor's claims for reimbursement.

(e) The sponsor may claim reimbursement for any meals which are examined for meal quality by the State agency, auditors, or local health authorities and found to meet the meal pattern requirements.

(f) The sponsor shall not claim reimbursement for meals served to children at any site in excess of the site's approved level of meal service, if one has been established under § 225.6(d)(2). However, the total number of meals for which operating costs are claimed may exceed the approved level of meal service if the meals exceeding this level were served to adults performing necessary food service labor in accordance with paragraph (d)(5) of this section. In reviewing a sponsor's claim, the State agency shall ensure that reimbursements for second meals are limited to the percentage tolerance established in § 225.15(b)(4).

[54 FR 18208, Apr. 27, 1989, as amended at 55 FR 13469, Apr. 10, 1990; 64 FR 72485, Dec. 28, 1999]

§ 225.10 Audits and management evaluations.

(a) *Audits.* State agencies shall arrange for audits of their own operations to be conducted in accordance with the Department's Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR part 3015). Unless otherwise exempt, sponsors shall arrange for audits to be conducted in accordance with 7 CFR part 3015. State agencies shall provide OIG with full opportunity to audit the State agency and sponsors. Unless otherwise exempt, audits at the State and sponsor levels shall be conducted in accordance with OMB Circular A-133 and the Department's implementing regulations at 7 CFR part 3052. (To obtain the OMB circular referenced in this

paragraph, see 5 CFR 1310.3.) While OIG shall rely to the fullest extent feasible upon State-sponsored audits of sponsors, it shall, when considered necessary, (1) make audits on a State-wide basis, (2) perform on-site test audits, and (3) review audit reports and related working papers of audits performed by or for State agencies.

(b) *Management evaluations.* (1) State agencies shall provide FNS with full opportunity to conduct management evaluations (including visits to sponsors) of all operations of the State agency. Each State agency shall make available its records, including records of the receipts and expenditures of funds, upon a reasonable request by FNS.

(2) The State agency shall fully respond to any recommendations made by FNSRO pursuant to the management evaluation.

(3) FNSRO may require the State agency to submit on 20 days notice a corrective action plan regarding serious problems observed during any phase of the management evaluation.

(c) *Disregards.* In conducting management evaluations or audits for any fiscal year, the State agency, FNS or OIG may disregard overpayment which does not exceed \$100 or, in the case of State agency administered programs, does not exceed the amount established by State law, regulations or procedures as a minimum for which claims will be made for State losses generally. No overpayment shall be disregarded, however, when there are unpaid claims for the same fiscal year from which the overpayment can be deducted or when there is substantial evidence of violation of criminal law or civil fraud statutes.

[54 FR 18208, Apr. 27, 1989, as amended at 71 FR 39518, July 13, 2006]

§ 225.11 Corrective action procedures.

(a) *Purpose.* The provisions in this section shall be used by the State agency to improve Program performance.

(b) *Investigations.* Each State agency shall promptly investigate complaints received or irregularities noted in connection with the operation of the Program, and shall take appropriate action to correct any irregularities. The State agency shall maintain on file all